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Almdal, Kristoffer; Hassager, Ole; Mortensen, Kell; Bach, Anders; Rasmussen, Henrik K.; Pyckhout-Hintzen, Wim

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Strongly non-linear extensional stress is not dominated by finite chain extensibility in polystyrene melts undergoing large steady rate extensional flowsⁱ.

Kristoffer Almdal¹, Ole Hassager², Kell Mortensen³, Anders Bach²,
Henrik Koblitz Rasmussen⁴, Wim Pyckhout-Hintzen⁵.

1: Department of Nanotechnology, Technical University of Denmark. 2: Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering, Technical University of Denmark. 3: Department of Basic Sciences and Environment, Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen. 4: Department of Mechanical Engineering, Technical University of Denmark. 5: Jülich Centre for Neutron Science-1 & Institute for Complex Systems, Forschungszentrum Jülich

We use small-angle neutron scattering to measure the molecular stretching in polystyrene melts undergoing steady elongational flow at large stretch rates. The radius of gyration of the central segment of a partly deuterated polystyrene molecule is, in the stretching direction, increasing with the steady stretch rate to a power of about 0.25. This value is about half of the exponent observed for the increase in stress value σ , in agreement with Gaussian behavior. Thus, finite chain extensibility does not seem to play an important role in the strongly non-linear extensional stress behavior exhibited by the linear polystyrene melt.

ⁱ Ole Hassager, Kell Mortensen, Anders Bach, Kristoffer Almdal, Henrik Koblitz Rasmussen, Wim Pyckhout-Hintzen, *Rheologica Acta*, *in press*.